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5G is safe and key to New York's recovery

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Bloomberg

Given the popularity of telecommuting and the efficiencies it offers, remote work is likely here to stay.

In fact, a few surveys have determined that fewer than **one in five** executives want to return to a pre-pandemic routine, and **one in three** employees would consider quitting their job altogether if forced to be in the office full time.

With those realities in mind, and in the face of a significant labor shortage that puts a newfound premium on employee retention, many companies are opting for a hybrid work model.

The success of a part-time work-from-home approach relies on ensuring that workers have reliable and robust online access.

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This is something that even a sharply divided Congress can agree on, as evidenced by the recently announced bipartisan infrastructure deal, which **reportedly includes** \$65 billion for universal broadband. The future of this critical investment is increasingly threatened, however—not by geographical challenges or local zoning laws or even NIMBYism but by a growing phenomenon of misinformation, conspiracy theories and outright lies about the safety of **5G**.

From 77 mobile towers **burned** in Britain to the Nashville, Tenn., **bombing**, a disturbing wave of anti-5G sentiment is rising across the nation and the globe. The claims not only threaten the widespread adoption of next-generation connectivity at a time when we need it most to bolster the economic recovery effort, but they also could serve to undermine

efforts to bolster public safety by preventing the deployment of critical communications infrastructure.

The industry cannot be complacent in the face of this threat. It is incumbent on us to educate elected officials, business leaders and other policymakers about the truth regarding 5G and the danger of failing to invest in next-generation connectivity—which would leave [New York](#) and the rest of the U.S. behind.

The consensus of seven decades of research by worldwide health and safety organizations is that electromagnetic emissions of 5G at the levels allowed by the [Federal Communications Commission](#) are safe. No adverse health effects have been definitively linked with exposure to wireless technologies.

That isn't to say that additional research should not be pursued. But those efforts should not derail important technological investments and advancements now that would bring much-needed connectivity to underserved communities and facilitate the kind of innovations necessary to move our state and nation forward.

The reality is that without sufficient connectivity upgrades, the digital divide that was laid bare and exacerbated during the pandemic will only worsen, making it even more difficult for communities that were disproportionately impacted by Covid-19 to receive the access they need to succeed in the “new normal.”

In New York City alone, [40%](#) of households do not have both home and mobile internet connections; [18%](#) have neither. This leaves those who most need reliable online access to facilitate remote work, education, telehealth and more at an even greater disadvantage.

The deployment of 5G can play a key role in closing the digital divide. The overwhelming majority of Americans—[81%](#) in 2019—own a smartphone, making mobile devices an opportunity to address the lack of connectivity. That's especially true for low-income individuals, people of color and young adults, who are more likely to rely on a smartphone as their primary means of online access.

With the economy slowly but steadily rebounding from the pandemic, New York and the U.S. cannot afford to lose any measure of competitiveness or, worse yet, regress. It is

critical that we act now to facilitate next-generation connectivity so all New Yorkers can thrive.

To do that we must redouble our efforts to reject harmful misinformation—be it merely misguided or intentionally insidious.

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Inline Play

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